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C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 002854

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NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE, NSC FOR ABRAMS/DORAN/LOGGERFO

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [CASC](#) [KPAL](#) [KWBG](#) [PHUM](#)
SUBJECT: MGGZ01 - ISRAELI GAZA INCURSION - JERUSALEM JULY 8
SITREP

REF: JERUSALEM 2835

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles, per reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

Summary

¶1. (C) ConGenoffs assisted in the transfer of 68 American citizens from Erez Crossing to the Allenby Bridge for passage to Jordan on July 8. Another 34 Amcits originally scheduled to depart Gaza either failed to bring the proper documentation for transit or failed to show up at Erez. IDF military operations continued July 7-8, with Israeli forces reaching the outer sectors of Gaza City. At least 14 Palestinians were reported killed and over 45 wounded in a series of clashes. At least six Qassam rockets were fired in the direction of Sderot on July 7, with three reported injuries. In the West Bank, an IDF raid into the al-Askar refugee camp resulted in one Palestinian militant killed and another three wounded in the exchange of gunfire. Palestinian President Abbas told the media July 7 that Egyptian mediation efforts to secure the release of Gilad Shalit are continuing. All other Gaza crossings remain closed, including the Rafah Crossing where a reported 5,000 Palestinians remain stranded on the Egyptian side.

AMCIT Update

¶2. (C) On the morning of July 8, Post successfully brought across 68 of 102 American citizens requesting assistance to leave Gaza via the Erez crossing point. According to ConGenoffs, nine Amcits were unable to cross because they failed to bring the necessary travel documents, while another 25 Amcits were reported no-shows. As of 1200 hours local, the 68 Amcits were being processed through the Allenby Bridge en-route to Jordan. Post ACS officer reported that Israeli officials at Allenby are cooperating in the processing of the Amcits.

Military Developments

¶3. (C) IDF operations are ongoing in Gaza July 7-8, resulting in at least 14 Palestinians reported killed and over 45 wounded. Palestinian sources claimed that a Palestinian civilian, possibly hearing impaired, was reportedly crushed to death when an Israeli bulldozer demolished his home in the Atrata section of northern Gaza. A 78-year-old Palestinian reportedly died in the Egyptian terminal at Rafah where an approximately 500 Palestinians are

awaiting passage into Gaza. (Note: Approximately 4,500 others are outside the terminal seeking entry into Gaza. End note.)

14. (C) During the early morning hours of July 8, IDF soldiers, supported by tanks, APCs, and helicopters advanced from the Karni Crossing into areas adjacent to the outlying Gaza City neighborhoods of Zeitoun and Shija'eah. During the incursion, at least two Palestinian gunmen -- including one NSF officer -- were killed by IDF tank fire, with an additional nine wounded. A third Palestinian gunman later died from his wounds. IDF forces in the north have re-deployed from several localities around Beit Lahiya and Atrata, where at least 11 Palestinians were killed July 7, and another 37 wounded.

15. (U) At least six Qassam rockets were fired at Israel in the direction of Sderot on July 7, resulting in light injuries to three Israeli civilians.

16. (U) In the West Bank, the IDF July 7 conducted a raid into the al-Askar refugee camp near Nablus, killing one al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades member. At least three other al-Aqsa gunmen were wounded in the exchange of gunfire. A second al-Aqsa gunman died of wounds sustained during a July 6 IDF raid in Jenin to capture al-Aqsa leader Zakaria Zubeidi. The IDF also conducted a series of raids on Islamic charities located in Ramallah, Nablus, and in Yatta village near Hebron. A total of 9 Palestinians were arrested and the IDF confiscated documents and computers from the charitable offices. The IDF also ordered the closure of the Yatta Islamic Charity office for one year.

Political Developments

17. (SBU) During a July 7 press conference in Gaza City, President Abbas stated that Egyptian mediation efforts are ongoing to secure the release of Gilad Shalit. Abbas also said it is a "national duty" to put an end to Qassam rocket fire. Abbas rejected PA Interior Minister Said Siyam's declaration of a state of emergency, adding that such a declaration could only come from the Palestinian president. Abbas is expected to depart Gaza for Ramallah on July 8.

18. (SBU) Following July 7 Friday prayers, there were reported demonstrations in Nablus, Hebron, and Ramallah protesting IDF operations in Gaza. The protesters also denounced the international community's silence in the wake of the ongoing IDF operations.

19. (C) In the midst of the IDF operations in Gaza, internal Fatah-Hamas clashes have continued. A senior Preventive Security Officer, Haitham al-Rai, was reportedly kidnapped July 7 in Gaza City and summarily executed. His body was later discovered in a garbage dump. Fatah accused Hamas elements of carrying out the killing, which they believe was retaliation for the killing of a Hamas member earlier in the week.

Humanitarian Update

110. (SBU) Crossings: All Gaza crossings (Karni, Nahal Oz, Rafah) remain closed, with the exception of Erez which has allowed passage for those who coordinated their departure with Israel. Approximately 5,000 Palestinians remain stranded in Egypt awaiting passage into Gaza. The PA has thus far refused an Israeli offer to use the Kerem Shalom crossing for humanitarian cases waiting in Egypt.

111. (SBU) Electricity: According to USAID Gaza-based field staff, Rafah has had no electricity and water since 1100 hours on July 5. Khan Yunis is able to provide electricity to Rafah for only two hours each day since Khan Yunis is not

capable of covering the demand for both areas. Rafah municipality crews are unable to repair the damaged lines due to the presence of the IDF in the area. Efforts by the ICRC to negotiate access to the damaged lines for the repair crews have not been successful. The Acting Mayor of Rafah has approached USAID field staff requesting USG assistance to allow municipal workers access to the lines.

WALLES